

THE

HISTORICAL

Tragedy

BALLAD

OF

May Culzean.

Founded on Fact.



Printed for the Booksellers.



MAY CULZEAN.

The historical ballad of May Culzean is supposed to be founded on fact. There certainly was a Lady of that name, who lived in Carrick, and who is represented as a woman of extraordinary virtue and heroism, and who, we are led to believe, was a beautiful woman, and this Sir John, being of the order of Dominican Friars, had great authority in the country, probably about Carrick.

This order of Friars was first instituted at Ayr, by King Alexander the second, in the year 1230, when he built the church of St. John the Baptist in the citadel of Ayr. This establishment was confirmed by King Robert Bruce, in the year 1371. No doubt the order of Friars was soon extended all over the country, and particularly at Maybole, about nine miles from Ayr, where they built a very great church connected with an establishment of the

iesthood, called Carsereguel, to which is thought Sir John belonged. It is also believed he was a covetous man, as many of his kind were, and some of them never stood at murder to accumulate wealth. His establishment at Maybole continued to increase in wickedness, uninterrupted, till the famous John Knox, whose arguments with the Abbot of Carsereguel, may be seen in a work lately published.

The deception used by the Monks and Friars in Carsereguel, in dipping weak and diseased children in a well in the premises, on a certain day in the month of May, in order to restore health, was to help the poorer orders of Friars, by the contribution made at the well. This superstition still continues, for on the first Sabbath of May, carts loaded with sick, of every description, will be seen driving, from every quarter, 20 miles round Maybole, to partake of Holy Water.

THE
HISTORICAL BALLAD
OF

May Culzean.

Tune—*Gil Morrice.*

HAVE ye not heard of fause Sir John?
Wha liv'd in the west country,
How he has betray'd eight damsels fair,
And drown'd them in the sea?

Now he's awa to May Culzean.

She was her father's heir,
The greatest beauty o' the land,
I solemnly declare.

"Thou art the darling o' my heart,

"He says, fair May Culzean.

"Thou far exceed'st beauty rare,

"That ever I hae seen.

And I'm a Knight of wealth and might,
 Of Town lands twenty-three,
 And ye's be the lady o' them a',
 Fair May, if ye'll gae wi' me.

Excuse me then, she said Sir John,
 "To wed I am owre young,
 Unless I hae my parent's leave,
 "Wi' you I dare na gang.

But he's taen a charm frae aff his arm
 "And stuck it on her sleeve,"
 And he has made her follow him
 Without her parent's leave.

Of gold and jewels she has taen
 Wi' her five hundred pound,
 And the bravest horse her father had,
 She's taen to ride upon.

So merrily they rode along,
 Made neither stop nor stay,
 Until they came to the fatal place,
 Which is called, Benan Bay.

"Light down, light down, now May Culzean,
 "Light down, and speak to me,
 For here have I drowned eight damsels fair,
 "And the ninth are ye shall be.

- " Cast aff, cast aff, thy Jewels fine,
 " So costly rich and brave,
 " For they're too costly and too good,
 " To sink in the sea wave,
 " Her jewels fine she then put aff,
 " And thus she made her moan,
 " Have mercy on a virgin young,
 " I pray thee, sweet Sir John,
 " Cast aff thy coats, and gay mantle,
 " And smock o' Holland lawn,
 " For their owre costly and owre guid,
 " To rot in the seas an',
 " Then turn thee round, I pray Sir John,
 " See the leaf flee owre the tree,
 " For it never befitted a book learned man,
 " A naked lady to see.
 " As fause Sir John did turn him round,
 " To see the leaf flee owre the—
 " She grasped him in her arms sma,
 " And flung him in the sea.
 " Now lie ye there ye wild Sir John,
 " Whar ye thought to lay me,
 " Ye wad hae drown'd me as naked's I was born,
 " But ye's get your claes frae me.

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jewels costly rich and rare

straight puts on again,

lightly springs upon her horse

and leads his by the rein.

And lady dear, was void of fear,

steeds were swift and free,

he reached her father's lofty towers,

before the clock struck three.

First she met the stable groom,

was her waiting man,

when he heard his lady's voice,

ran with cap in hand,

Far hae ye been, fair May Culzean

Tha owns this dapple gray?

That's a foundling, she replied,

Which I got on my way.

And out and spake the green parrot,

He says, fair May Culzean,

What hae ye done wi' yon brave Knight

That gied wi' you yestreen?

And your tongue my pretty parrot,

Na' I'se be kind to thee,

Where ye got ae handfu' o' groats

Y parrot shall get three.

"Then out and spake her father dear,

"From the chamber where he lay,

"What is it ails my pretty parrot

"That he speaks so long e'er day?

"There came a cat into my cage

"Had nearly worried me,

"And I was calling on May Culzean

"To come and set me free."

And first she told her father dear,

Of the deed that she had done,

And likewise to her mother dear,

Concerning fause Sir John.

So aff they set with one consent,

By dawning of the day,

Until they came to the Carleton sands,

And there his corps it lay.

His body tall, by that great fall

Was dashed to and fro,

The golden ring that he had on

Was broke in pieces two.

And they hae taken up his corpse

To yonder pleasant green,

And there they buried fause Sir John,

For fear he should be seen.